

May 27, 1977

Dear Dr. Lederberg,

Here I am again with another fellowship proposal, this time for the National Institute on Aging. The NSF decided that the study of the hormonal and experiential bases of maternal behavior in the gerbil was not a national need or even a national wish. Although I don't entirely blame them, but I'm curious as to what the fellowships that did get funded looked like. Anyway, the National Institute on Aging actually sent out a memo soliciting fellowship proposals, so it seemed worth looking at what had already been done in the area relating aging, hormonal function, and behavior. The result, especially for female behavior, seems to be very little.

I'm only asking for a year's funding on this proposal, because it seems to me that the work is so preliminary that I'm not sure in what direction I'll want to go with it once the basic data starts coming in. It should be interesting, though. I'm hoping that I'll be able to go on to look at possible changes in hormone transport into the cell nucleus and/or binding to chromatin in aging animals, since that's a direction in which the lab is already going--but since at this point we don't even know if the old rats may not be just as capable of utilizing exogenous hormone as young ones, I don't want to get too excited about the possibility.

For the time being, I'm trying to avoid getting involved in doing more research, but am just trying to finish up various teaching commitments and write up all the things I should before I get caught up in summer teaching. I finally decided to take your advice on the dissertation, and am drafting a short article to be submitted to Developmental Psychobiology. I'm also working on a note for Animal Behavior and Pauline and I are about to send out a larger article to Physiology

and Behavior. The gerbil maternal pheromone data is just about ready to write up (I'd like to test another two litters just to be sure where the phenomenon starts and ends in time); I plan to send that either to Behavioral Biology or to Hormones and Behavior. Besides the articles, I'm finishing up a study guide to an introductory psychology text by Thompson, McGaugh, and Nelson and am also working on another fellowship proposal dealing with androgen aromatization in the rodent brain and whether it is necessary for behavior. So I keep busy. I'd like to get all the writing out of the way at least a couple of weeks before I start teaching in the second summer session at the end of July, since that will run almost to the beginning of the fall semester, or quarter, and I'll be teaching two courses then.

I don't think I wrote you about it before, but I got turned down a second time for Dr. Epstein's postdoc training program in clinical genetics. I have the feeling that no Ph.D. will ever go through that program unless they have an M.D. as well. I'm still thinking about trying to get into a clinical program, but I'm just not sure what my chances are of getting into one. Unfortunately, I suspect that they get worse with every year beyond the doctorate. It isn't much help to be able to look back and see where one has made the wrong decisions.

I'm enclosing a note so that you can let me know that you got this package. Since Dr. Pribram wrote a letter for me to the Community College Credentials Committee that they swear they never received, I've gotten even more nervous about communication by mail.

Sincerely,



Sara Gerling